

**FIP Background:** The Ecuadorian mahi mahi fishery improvement project (FIP) aims to certify all longline caught mahi (dolphinfish) in Ecuador as sustainable and traceable by the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC). Currently there is no estimated date for full MSC certification, as full certification will require international cooperation between Ecuador, Peru, and the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATCC) to improve stock management. A MSC pre-assessment published in January 2010 identified aspects of the Ecuadorian longline mahi fishery in need of improvement before MSC certification can be conferred:

1. Uncertainty in the status of the stock;
2. Lack of formal harvest strategy;
3. Lack of data on bycatch;
4. Lack of data on endangered, threatened, and protected (ETP) species interactions;
5. Lack of effective national management; and
6. Lack of international management.

In 2010 a FIP action plan was created to address these deficiencies. The action plan was subsequently updated in March 2012.

**Sea Delight's FIP Membership and Contribution:** Sea Delight, LLC sources mahi from Muisne, Manta, and Esmeraldas, Ecuador. Although Sea Delight is not yet an official FIP participant, they have demonstrated interest in joining the FIP by attending the annual stakeholder meetings in Manta, Ecuador in 2012. Sea Delight plans to attend the next stakeholder meeting scheduled for April 2014 in Manta, Ecuador. WWF-US's confirmation of Sea Delight as a FIP participant is pending a third party consultant review of Sea Delight's progress against industry asks – a list of specific activities for companies to accomplish based upon the FIP action plan. Until then, Sea Delight is working to increase its supplier's involvement within the ongoing FIP activities and to verify that its mahi products are being sourced from fishermen implementing FIP activities.

### **Sea Delight FIP Activities**

1. **Traceability:** Sea Delight is currently working with its supplier, WWF-Ecuador, the Sub-Secretary of Fishery Resources (SRP), and Trace Register to develop a plan for traceability within its own mahi supply chain. Sea Delight has previous experience implementing traceability measures through use of an internal traceability system and Trace Register in Vietnam and Indonesia. Sea Delight plans to use Trace Register to help track data on mahi product shipments back to the fishing vessel and location of capture. The groups met on October 19, 2012 to discuss options for implementation of a traceability system.
  - a. **National FIP Action Supported:** Although not included specifically within the FIP action plan, traceability is a requirement for MSC certification.
  - b. **Importance:** Tracking mahi products helps ensure that Sea Delight is credible to consumers, that FIP products remain within Sea Delight's supply chain, and that the benefits from improvements accrue to the fishermen who implement FIP activities.

2. **Circle Hook Provision:** Sea Delight is currently working to identify a circle hook (C-hook) manufacturer willing to supply hooks at cost to the FIP. Such a development would allow Sea Delight to donate hooks to fishermen in the FIP.
  - a. **National FIP Action Supported:** WWF requests industry members interested in supporting the FIP to provide financial support, including supplying C-hooks .
  - b. **Importance:** C-hooks reduce the catch of sea turtle and juvenile mahi compared to traditional J-hooks. Bycatch reduction is essential for MSC-certification of the fishery.
  
3. **Billback Program:** Sea Delight, along with its supplier, have developed and implemented a billback program to financially support the FIP. Sea Delight and its supplier each pay five cents for every pound of mahi sold under a private label. The billback program currently funds traceability work within its mahi supply chain while the long-term goal of the billback program is to create a funding model to support the Ecuadorian National Action Plan for Dolphinfish Management and Conservation.
  - a. **National FIP Action Supported:** WWF requests that industry members who wish to support the FIP to provide financial support.
  - b. **Importance:** Stable financial support through the billback program is essential to implement necessary improvements for MSC certification, including developing educational materials, employing scientific studies, and purchasing circle hooks.

**Sea Delight Next Steps:** Sea Delight plans to further its participation in the FIP through:

1. Continuing to work with SRP and WWF to establish a supply chain traceability program;
2. Procuring and supplying circle hooks to the fishermen in the FIP; and
3. Providing stakeholder input when and where possible, including attending the next annual stakeholder meeting in 2014.